I: Titiev E-5 (1948) 1951 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche-Huilliche

A parturient woman is usually attended by a *machi* or a *machi*, her own husband, and, occasionally, one other man or woman. She is given a sturdy stick and encouraged to hold it and to walk up and down as long as she can. During labor she takes draughts of water, sometimes mixed with ginger. When parturition is about to occur, the mother assumes a kneeling position on a sheepskin mat large enough to catch whatever matter may be discharged incidental to birth. If help is needed a strong man or woman may grasp the patient and press down on her abdomen. It is thought that particular care must be taken with women having their first babies to make sure that the child is guided through the proper orifice.

As soon as birth has taken place the attendant midwife or *machi* hears a special instrument, *kutrüf dowe* ("umbilical cord cutter"), made of sharp metal, formerly of stone. With this instrument, which is reserved for this one use, she severs the cord, then ties the knot. Upon the expulsion of the afterbirth the husband is directed to gather up the sheepskin on which accouchement occurred, and to be sure that it contains every particle of solid and fluid substance that was shed at the confinement. Should anything have fallen to the ground, the husband carefully scrapes it up and puts it into the sheepskin. The mat and its contents are then secretly buried in a deep hole, dug in virgin soil at an unfrequented spot. A stone or a heavy piece of wood may be used as a weight to prevent animals from getting at the buried bundle. Secrecy is observed for fear of witches or of jealous people, such as lovers or women who may want the recently delivered mother for a daughter-in-law.

Soon after a delivery has been safely accomplished, all soiled garments and bedding are carefully laundered in a stream. Mother and child are bathed in a mixture of water and the fragrant leaves of plants such as *foye*,[5] *ifulkuñ*,[6] or *natrufi*.[7] Sometimes, if a daughter has just been born, the mother may

[5] Foye is the cinnamon tree which is called *canelo* in Spanish. It is very sacred to the Araucanians and is used in a wide range of religious contexts.

[6] Augusta (1916, 1: 65) identified this plant as *Vestia foetidissima*.

[7] Identified as *Solanum Gayanum* Remy, family Solanaceae, in Augusta op. cit., p. 148.

10: Hilger E-5 (1946-1952) 1957
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from our orchard. Several days later he returned with two of them, went to the house of one of our neighbors who had two daughters and where he was well known, and offered an apple to each of the two girls. One girl ate hers immediately, the other ate hers a little later—it was this one the machi wished to marry. But the girl did not want to marry him; her parents knew this. Without warning, the girl suddenly became insane. Her father told the cacique what had happened, and said, 'You must help us.' The cacique sent for his own brother and for the machi, and, in the presence of the brother and the girl's father, said to the machi, 'You have done damage to this girl; you want to force her to marry you; that is why you have done this to her.' But the machi would not admit it. The cacique, his brother, and the father of the girl then went to the Argentine military officers who were in control of our area. The cacique had told the machi to appear there, but he did not do so. While the three men were talking to the officers, they noticed through a window that the machi was passing by. The military officers ordered two soldiers to bring him in. Again the machi denied that he had done any harm to the girl. The Argentine colonel ordered a scissors to be brought and threatened to cut off the machi's hair—he had long hair. But the machi kept saying, 'No, señor. No, señor.' Then they whipped him with 5 lashes; still he denied it, then with 10, and still he denied it. They threatened 15 lashes, and then he admitted his guilt. The colonel ordered him to remove immediately the damage he had inflicted on the girl. The machi promised to do this, and accompanied by two soldiers started out for the girl's house. Near a brook along the mountainside, he asked the soldiers to halt. They did so. He plucked several handfuls of grass that grew close to the water's edge and they walked on. When they arrived at the girl's home, he asked for a clean plate. He crushed the grass between the palms of his hands, squeezed out the juice, and told the girl to swallow it. This was two months after he had done her the damage. That girl vomited all the apple that she had eaten two months before! After that she got well. Later, she told how, during the period of insanity, she had run to the shores of Lake Lacar and had jumped into and out of three fires there without being burned."

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PHYSICIANS; THE MACHITUN

The sick were treated by herbalists who were specialists and by machi who were either both herbalists and sorcerers, or only sorcerers. "It depended upon the type of sickness that a person had, as to who was called in." Machi, however, are not respected by Argentines;

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they call them curandero (quacks); herbalists are respected; they are often spoken of as yerbateras (dealers in herbs). Machi and herbalists were of both sexes.

The machi exercised his curative powers during a performance known as machitun. It was performed over any sick person, including infants. "Sometimes the machi cured people; sometimes he made them worse." Previous to the performance of a machitun, a substantial price in animals had to be promised. Today, the machitun is forbidden by Argentine law; occasionally, however, it is performed under cover. The machi beats the kultrun, screams and sings; holds a knife in the fire until well heated and passes it over his lower lip without burning the lip; and discovers the cause of the sickness by asking the sick person, through another, an intermediary, about the symptoms. In Malleo area a woman machi orders a black pullet to be brought, directs the sick person to spit into the pullet's mouth while she herself holds its bill apart, then kills the pullet immediately, opens its viscera, and examines well the contents, in which she discovers the type of sickness that afflicts the person. This she announces and also, in vague terms, the person who caused the sickness.

TREATMENT BY HERBALISTS AND LAY PERSONS

Herbalists as specialists are practically nonexistent among the Argentine Araucanians. "In Chile there are still many of them. Some of our people could again learn from them, but our herbs here are different from those in Chile; therefore the remedies for certain sicknesses are different from ours, in Chile." Medicinal plants, used as household remedies, however, are known to many persons, including children. School-age boys and girls, who scampered over the countryside to find for me specimens of plants mentioned by their grandmothers as household remedies, usually brought back additional plants which the grandmother had forgotten to mention. The anatomy of the human body is obviously not well known—the heart was indicated as being at the waistline; the stomach, in the abdomen.

An Argentine doctor in charge of the First Aid Station (La Sala de Primer Auxilio) and the Military Hospital—both in San Martin de los Andes—where free health service is given to all who wish it, said, "On the whole, the Araucanians are a sturdy people. And they know how to use their household remedies effectively."

The following medicinal plants are used as household remedies. Names here given are in Spanish unless the informant knew only the Araucanian name, in which case the Araucanian name is given.